



## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF THE AIR FORCE NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE**

Graduate Research Paper

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## **Abstract**

Within the last few years, there has been a call to bring the nuclear mission back to what it was in the eyes of many Air Force leaders. The first step to developing the nuclear mission set is standing up Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) to take the lead in organizing and training two-thirds of the nuclear triad. To understand the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise, one needs to look to the past and see how Strategic Air Command (SAC) came into existence. The decades from the ending of SAC in 1991 to 2015 also impacted the culture of the nuclear mission.

The first command to accept the nuclear mission sets, both bomber and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), after the end of the Cold War was Air Combat Command (ACC). The ICBMs would move out of ACC to Air Force Space Command (AFSPC) in 1993. A thorough review was conducted of the surveys performed under each command to see how culture changed in the Nuclear Enterprise. The study highlights the positive and negative impacts on the current Nuclear Enterprise culture. The research goal is looking at the nuclear culture and how to improve culture through leadership.

*Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife and two children, who sacrificed their time and efforts with all the trips and paper writing during the program. Many special occasions were missed to deal with class schedules and writing this paper for SANDS. Their unwavering support made this all possible.*

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Robert C. Evans

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# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF THE AIR FORCE NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE

## I. Introduction

*We know that leadership is very much related to change. As the pace of change accelerates, there is naturally a greater need for effective leadership.*

*John P. Kotter*

One can learn a lot about dealing with change by examining the history of the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise. Organizational change is always difficult and takes many years to meet expectations and it comes down to leadership at all levels. The AF Nuclear Enterprise is no different. Organizational change can often times generate organizational redesign and a shift in mission focus. The process of change can cause even the most grounded leaders to struggle to make sense of the situation. In the military, as in a business, the way an organization moves forward is with a roadmap or vision provided by the leader. The vision is met through the roadmap of the leadership, gaining support of all members of the organization, and through the commander's own skills as a leader. John Kotter, in his book *Leading Change*, outlines a way to bring about organizational change that focuses on leadership rather than the management functions to build and ensure success of enhancing an organization. By understanding how to utilize Kotter's method one can clearly see the direction the AF Nuclear Enterprise needs to take to move to the future.

This thesis seeks to answer the following question: Examining the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise from its inception in Strategic Air Command (SAC), its years in Air Combat Command (ACC) and Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), to its current place

in Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) perspectives, how does the Air Force successfully improve the command for the future of the Nuclear Enterprise? The Air Force is overhauling the force structure of the nuclear mission to provide the President of the United States the most effective nuclear force. Changes that affects multiple organizations require clear guidance and understanding at all levels in order to build on the positive elements of the past to create a more complete mission set. Kotter focuses on the leadership of an organization using 8-steps called; establishing urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture (Kotter, 2012). This 8-step business model can also be applied to the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise to serve as a roadmap for improving the organization that is undergoing strategic change.

This research project uses Kotter's leadership model to look at AFGSC today and examine how the organization can make positive steps toward enhancing mission and personnel readiness. To better understand the organization of AFGSC it is important to understand the history of the command with its origins in SAC, ACC, and AFSPC. These three commands each had their own place in laying the foundation of today's AFGSC but looking at the command through the lens of Kotter's method, there is room to improve the command by capitalizing on the positive aspects of its predecessors and building the command of the future. Chapter 2 establishes a baseline understanding with the literature review of the documents discussing SAC, ACC, AFSPC, and AFGSC. This chapter provides a brief synopsis of the time-period beginning with the establishment of

SAC in 1946 to present day AFGSC. Moving to the next chapter is the methodology for the research and what tools were used in the research project.

Chapter 3 looks at setting the baseline for Kotter's 8-steps of organization. This chapter explains, in great detail, the 8-steps and how the remainder of the research is applicable in a military organization. This chapter also looks at the different types of tools used to conduct the research with surveys from the Force Improvement Program (FIP) that was conducted in 2014-2015 in AFGSC. The other tools utilized are other surveys conducted throughout the organization from SAC to AFGSC. The final methodology is historical research and examining how history perceives the commands that lead to AFGSC. The next chapter focuses on AFGSC today and using Kotter's 8-steps to improve the command.

Chapter 4, analysis and results, takes the information on Kotter and applies it to AFGSC today. From the literature review in Chapter 2 this section uses the positive information from all three commands of the past to impart positive measures for AFGSC. Also, this chapter looks at the negative aspects from the commands and attempts to limit their existence in the future. Upon completion of the analysis, one moves to the final chapter to draw the conclusions of the research and the recommendations for future research in the area of AFGSC and organization structure.

Chapter 5, conclusion and recommendations, builds on the idea of the future of the Nuclear Enterprise under AFGSC and builds the command required by the President of the United States and the American people. The chapter contains recommendations for future research from the manning of an organization to how the command should be structured. This research project looked at the leadership perspective of AFGSC and how

to potentially improve that aspect. It is not looking at how to improve maintenance or aircraft generation for nuclear war. Taking the lead from Kotter and focusing on the leadership perspective at all levels from the airmen that turn wrenches to the headquarters staff at any level.

Many thoughts on organizing a command look to the business sector for best organizational structure. Others mention the business models will not work in a military organization because of the latitude the private sector has over the military. This paper seeks to refine Kotter's business model to work for military application. The military look to the private sector and try to improve the process to make it work in the military area of operations.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Chapter Overview**

There is a plethora of information written on the topic of the Nuclear Enterprise in the Air Force from SAC to AFGSC. This chapter reviews the nuclear force under SAC from 1946 to 1992 and examine the transition of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), along with long-range bombers to ACC. After only one year in ACC, ICBMs moved to AFSPC, while bombers were kept in ACC, significantly contributing to the atrophy in the Nuclear Enterprise until 2009. Further examination of the history of the Nuclear Enterprise shows the establishment of AFGSC and its acceptance of the nuclear mission both bomber and ICBMs in 2009 to 2015. Additionally, the blue ribbon reviews, Nuclear Posture Reviews (NPR), and regulatory guidance were reviewed. Finally, papers analyzing the current and former commands are taken into consideration throughout the sections of this chapter. The FIP reports are used to determine the current, relevant data of the AF Nuclear Enterprise under AFGSC. A review of SAC is the first step of the process to understand the Nuclear Enterprise.

### **History of Strategic Air Command**

The United States needed a force to employ the atomic bomb after the end of World War II. It was decided that SAC would be the command to have complete control of the nuclear mission in the Air Force. General George Kenney was the first commander of SAC and his job was to establish the new command (Logacre, 1990). After the post war drawdown, the idea of standing a new command up with limited resources proved to be General Kenney's downfall as the first commander. Kenney not

only had the responsibility of creating SAC, he was also assigned to the United Nations (UN) as special advisor on military affairs to the US delegation. The job at the UN occupied most of Kenney's time and the person in-charge of SAC at the time was the deputy commander, Major General St. Clair Streett. General Streett took the lead to set up the initial command and get units trained to carry out the mission of SAC. Still having the commander, General Kenney, away with other responsibilities, the fledging organization was unable to fully move into its full potential, of the command it needed to be, and eventually was. Eventually General Streett was replaced by Major General Clements McMullen in 1947 (Logacre, 1990).

General McMullen instituted several initiatives that essentially resulted in mission degradation of SAC as a command. The first initiative dealt with the command staff and reducing the numbers of personnel on staff to help fill the bomber units. The goal was for a smaller staff to take on more responsibilities for the betterment of the command. A by-product of these staff cuts, was other members of the organization began to depart as well, depleting the already limited expertise. Another effect of a smaller staff, as well as smaller bomber units, was the need for the personnel left behind to be trained in multiple areas. This led to McMullen's second initiative of cross-training individuals at the units.

Cross-training is taking the individuals from their primary mission duties and having them learn another job on the aircraft, i.e. pilots move to bombardier and bombardiers move to navigator. General McMullen was looking at saving on manpower by utilizing cross-training. This meant that a bomber squadron could operate with 34 officers instead of the authorized number of 81 thus saving the AF 2,300 officers in SAC (Moody, 1996). The problem with these cuts in manpower at the squadron levels was it

meant the needed personnel to conduct cross-training did not actually have full mission capabilities, thus leading to the eventual failure of the program. With all the initiatives that General McMullen took, the goal of actually bettering the command, he actually effectively led the command to failure, as it was not ready to conduct nuclear missions when the nation called for it. SAC under General Kenney was characterized as “two years of inadequate attention, skewed priorities, and outright command mismanagement” (Tillman, 2007). New leadership under General Curtis LeMay set the foundation of SAC and left a legacy the command felt even after his time as commander came to an end.

General LeMay wanted to eliminate the sense of complacency prevalent in SAC while under General Kenney’s command. SAC’s deficiencies in personnel, equipment, training, and morale were impacting the mission of the command and General LeMay looked to correct these deficiencies. The cross-training program was modified in that an individual needed to be perfect at their primary duty before they even considered learning another position on the crew. By modifying the program, LeMay introduced the mantra of “perfection is the standard” for SAC.

Also to combat complacency, he instituted the spot-promotion program where an individual could be promoted on-the-spot, without going through normal promotion steps. The spot-promotion program brought re-enlistments up in SAC and more people strived at being the best at their job (Tillman, 2007). With the spot-promotion program LeMay impacted the culture of the command and ultimately made people proud of being a SAC warrior. LeMay also instituted way of life programs at all SAC bases.

The way of life programs included different housing, educational opportunities, and support agencies at SAC bases. The SAC housing went away from traditional

military bunking of personnel. Now individuals had their own rooms with shared bathrooms and common areas. By creating these upgraded-living quarters, it essentially allowed for improved 24-hour operations and provided the necessary personnel for the nuclear mission (Tillman, 2007). Also the living conditions improved, allowing more educational programs for the officers and enlisted personnel. LeMay instituted a degree program at SAC bases to continue military personnel's continued education (Bleil, 2006). All of the support infrastructure was put into place to better take care of the personnel in SAC and eliminate retention problems in the command. All of these programs led to a better unit for SAC on accomplishing the nuclear mission of the nation.

LeMay wanted SAC at complete mission ready status all the time. With the way world politics were at the time, the command had to be ready to execute the mission, with a moment's notice. SAC started to have aircraft ready on the ground and crews postured, so if the nuclear balloon went up, the aircraft were able to depart in 15 minutes (Kozak, 2009). This was the standard for the command, and ensured everyone was ready to execute the mission. These traits of perfection, ready at all times, bled into the inspection realm of SAC as well.

SAC units not only had to be mission ready at all times, they also had to be inspection ready at all times. LeMay instituted the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) for all SAC units. An inspection team could show up anytime of the year to inspect a unit, without any prior notification or coordination. Because the unit was expected to be mission ready, they were expected to pass an inspection as well. By being ready all the time, SAC bred a sense of urgency into its members and ensured that no one was complacent with the job, instead everyone worked to achieve perfection as the norm.

SAC, under LeMay, was the command that looked to engage in the United States future wars in the nuclear realm. There were many commanders of SAC after LeMay, but he was the individual that set the groundwork for SAC.

During the years following LeMay's command, SAC went through multiple changes, to include new weapon systems and alert status until the end of the Cold War. Bombers, tankers, and reconnaissance aircraft conducted 24-hour operations for several years under SAC (Tillman, 2007). By having aircraft on station alert, the response time for engaging the enemy was cut following the President's call for a nuclear option. ICBMs came on-line during the time of SAC and were on alert, ready to launch at a moment's notice. SAC would maintain perfection in the command and have all assets required for the nuclear option ready when the President of the United States called for them (Deaile, 2007). The SAC mentality lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1992. The legacy of SAC was unable to survive its dissolution and the creation of the new commands of ACC and AFSPC.

### **History of Air Combat Command**

When the Cold War ended and SAC dissolved, a new command stood-up in the AF to conduct both nuclear and conventional missions called ACC. In 1992 the bomber aircrafts and ICBMs moved to this new command. ACC took the remnants of SAC and Tactical Air Command (TAC) and combined them together to create a command that would train and equip the force (Bleil, 2006). Another impact on the development of ACC into a command dealt with the air supremacy during the Gulf War. Tactical aircraft, i.e. fighters, and strategic aircraft, i.e. bombers, conducted attack missions in

support of the war. The air campaign victory in the Gulf War, brought about a change in culture that had a lasting impact on the nuclear mission both in bombers and ICBMs.

The shift in philosophy from SAC to ACC happened with the diminishing role of the bomber generals in charge of the AF. The last commander of SAC, General George Butler, suggested to the AF Chief of Staff, General Merrill McPeak that the bomber force, during the Gulf War, had a proficiency level approaching the same level as that of World War II bomber crews (Lambeth, 2000). General Butler attributed the lack of proficiency for conventional strikes to the bomber's culture of the nuclear mission. If there was any culture change happening the bomber crews needed to change the mentality from nuclear to conventional focus.

With the major changes seen at the end of the Cold War and the call for a culture shift (nuclear to conventional ability) during the Gulf War. The culture of the nuclear mission shifted away from its primary nuclear mission set of the bombers to more conventional mission set. This culture shift impacted training at all levels. The education programs under SAC slowly disappeared when ACC took charge of the nuclear force. Under ACC bomber crews were trained on conventional mission sets more than the nuclear mission set (Welch, 2013). Eventually bomber crewmembers no longer were trained during initial training on the nuclear mission and they focused solely on the conventional mission set (Peyer, 2008). It would be up to the operational units to conduct the training for the nuclear mission set. The changes shifted the focus of the AF from the nuclear mission to a more tactical mindset in the 1990s.

With the shift of focus away from the nuclear mission, the bomber force fell into the very same sense of complacency that SAC tried to eliminate. ACC also changed the

idea of how inspections ran with the dissolution of SAC. No-notice inspections ceased, and now instead of the inspectors showing up at a base unannounced, inspections were, in many cases, set to a rotation schedule of every 18 months. The need to be nuclear mission ready went from high demand to only when the Nuclear Surety Inspections happened every 18 months (Welch, 2013). The complacency was not just with the crews of the bomber force but all support agencies fell into the same lack of urgency and understanding of the nuclear mission.

The demands of the AF to fill an expeditionary role put a strain on the support for nuclear operations while conducting the conventional operations. The AF was fighting our nation's wars and it took manpower to accomplish this mission. ACC units were now required to fully support the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The maintenance, security forces, and other support agencies deployed and the nuclear mission suffered because the expertise left and focus fell off of conducting nuclear operations (Stout, 2012). The lack of focus on the nuclear mission and the shift to a more conventional employment caused complacency to become the norm in ACC with regards to the Nuclear Enterprise.

The complacency of the nuclear mission finally came to a head when nuclear weapons were flown from Minot AFB, ND to Barksdale AFB, LA in 2007 (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012). The event caused many senior leaders to shift focus back to the nuclear mission. Under SAC the nuclear mission was in the forefront and under ACC the pendulum shifted to the extreme, a case where no one even considered "nuclear." One commander of ACC described the B-52 as a "sunset system," meaning that the

nuclear bomber would not last long (Schlesinger, 2008). This mindset went beyond the commanders of ACC and infiltrated the rest of the bomber force (AFGSC, 2014).

ACC brought about significant changes to the Nuclear Enterprise with the bomber crews. The command brought about bomber crews that were more problem-solving and flexible in order to fight a conventional air war. The nuclear crews received better training on supporting the tactical level of operations that was lacking in the Gulf War. ACC brought the fighter pilot ethos to the bomber community. With the shift of focus of the AF back on the Nuclear Enterprise the bombers have moved again, this time to AFGSC, with the ultimate goal of bringing back the nuclear experience to the career field in 2009.

### **History of Air Force Space Command**

AFSPC, much like ACC, formed when the Cold War ended and SAC was dissolved. The command was set up to lead the AF into the 21st Century with space and cyber threats. The current mission of AFSPC is to provide resilient and affordable space and cyberspace capabilities for the Joint Force and the Nation (AFSPC, 2016). AFSPC was developed to enhance the warfighter in the conventional role and provide early warning for the nuclear threat. In 1993, AFSPC took responsibility of the ICBM force from ACC. With the acceptance of the nuclear strike mission of the ICBMs, AFSPC then had the responsibility to conduct nuclear options if the President of the United States called upon them. AFSPC took the mission and went forward, changing the culture of the ICBM force.

With AFSPC being the command to lead in space and cyberspace, it meant that the nuclear mission took a backseat to certain programs. The ICBM force would limp along through the time of AFSPC fighting for funding with space programs that enhanced the warfighter in Afghanistan and Iraq. The nuclear mission would suffer budget concerns at all levels of the AF and the federal government. With cuts in manning and nuclear weapons, the ICBM force was faced with accomplishing a mission that was not in the forefront, and doing so with decreasing numbers of personnel. With the focus on the space mission the nuclear mission suffered.

Also under AFSPC the inspection regimen changed for the missile community. Much like inspections changed in ACC, the same held true in AFSPC. The ICBM units went from no-notice to planned inspections, thus knowing exactly when the inspectors would be on the base (Welch, 2013). This shift in focus went from being ready every day for the mission to a mentality of being “inspection ready.” With this focus shift from mission readiness to inspection readiness, the ICBM force also lost their SAC mentality of perfection being the norm.

Missileers brought the checklist mentality to AFSPC and this was not received well. Space is fluid, and in many cases the equipment that a space operator utilized did not follow a checklist. The overall goal of a missileer in AFSPC was to complete their initial missile crew assignment and move to a space assignment next instead of staying in missiles (Stout, 2012). Because of the focus to get to a space job, much of the nuclear expertise left the nuclear mission area. This shift caused complacency to happen in the nuclear support functions as well, much like the nuclear bomber force in ACC.

The complacency of the nuclear mission in AFSPC lead to failed Nuclear Surety inspections of the ICBM force. These failures led to more changes to the ICBM force removing much of the SAC culture that missiles lived (and thrived) under. The ICBM culture under SAC was about pride and conducting the mission, but under AFSPC it was about passing inspections (Stout, 2012). With the inspection mentality instilled into the ICBM force there were opportunities for issues to arise and one such issue was the shipping of nuclear fuses to Taiwan in 2006, as well as not discovering the miss-shipment until 2008 (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012). There was something that needed done for the Nuclear Enterprise and the establishment of AFGSC looked to curtail the loss of nuclear expertise in the ICBM force.

### **Air Force Global Strike Command**

AFGSC came into existence in 2008 when the nuclear mission became the focus of the federal government, due to the numerous mishaps within the enterprise. With the flying across the country of nuclear-tipped missiles as well as the shipment of ICBM fuses to Taiwan, AF leadership reestablished the nuclear missions as the number one priority in the AF. The Secretary of Defense created a task force to conduct a review of the AF's nuclear mission led by James Schlesinger. The report called for the AF to establish a command that consolidated the nuclear bomber and ICBM forces under one command (Schlesinger, 2008). AFGSC was created, not around a weapon system, but around a lack of focus for the nuclear mission.

AFGSC did have their own issues like ACC and AFSPC, but one significant event happened in 2014 that changed the command and brought more focus on the nuclear

mission. The one incident, cheating conducted by missileers at Malmstrom AFB, MT in 2014, led to the AF re-evaluating the nuclear mission (AFGSC, 2014). With this single incident, an initiative was launched within the command that would change how AFGSC operated. The Force Improvement Program (FIP) surveyed the nuclear community in the AF from the operators to the support personnel. From the report of these surveys, many changes happened within AFGSC, one of the most significant being the upgrade from a 3-star commander to a 4-star commander; thus putting AFGSC on an equal footing with the other operational Major Commands of the AF. The FIP report brought to light the information on how the Nuclear Enterprise was viewed by the members of the organization. The reports were used to improve the bomber and ICBM forces bringing them back to the standard that is needed for the success of the nuclear mission. AFGSC is still growing and looking to the future of what the command should be.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **Chapter Overview**

The qualitative research methodology utilized for this research project is idiographic research often called case study. The case study consists of utilizing Kotter's 8-steps of leading change to see how the Nuclear Enterprise has changed from SAC to AFGSC. It is a historical case study analyzing the past commands and how the culture of the nuclear mission was impacted through the different commands and what the future of the Nuclear Enterprise will be. This chapter consists of the case study overview, Kotter's 8-step process, and research design.

With all the changes happening in the nuclear mission over time the status quo of the nuclear mission needed to change for the better in AFGSC. This case study looks at the time period from 1947 to 2015. The Air Force in many areas lost focus of the nuclear mission once the Cold War ended in 1991. Over time the focus has been placed back on the Nuclear Enterprise because of mistakes or incidents that happened. In order to have a better command for the future, the nuclear focus needs to be maintained and it must not atrophy back to what it was.

#### **Case Study Overview**

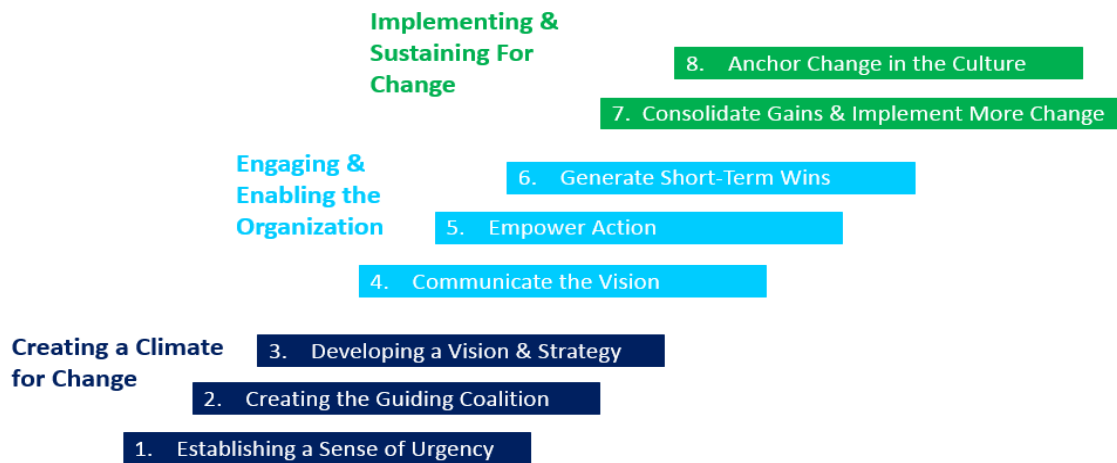
The primary methodology used in this study is the case study. The case study was selected because of the ability of the method to provide a holistic study of SAC to AFGSC. Using a case study as a research method is a very common choice when researching topics in culture and historical meanings for structure (Yin, 2009).

Supporting the case study, the questionnaires from FIP and Blue Ribbon Review are

utilized for gathering the information on the Nuclear Enterprise. The data from these surveys and historical research of the commands helped to facilitate a comparison between the past and current commands of the Nuclear Enterprise. The next section is the background of Kotter's 8-step process.

### **Kotter's 8-Steps**

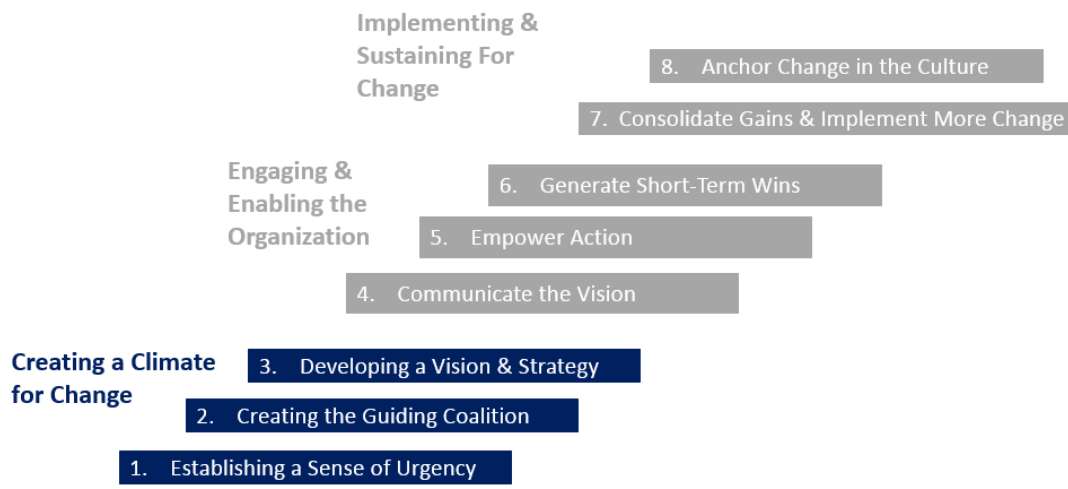
Dr. John Kotter is an American writer and educator from Harvard Business School writing many books on organizational structures and how to succeed in business with the proper kind of leadership. In his book, *Leading Change*, Kotter created a framework for organizations to handle the changing environment of the business world and how to work through the changes to succeed. With Kotter, organizations create errors that cause them to fail and the eight errors on why an organization fail are "allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, underestimating the power of vision, under communicating the vision by a factor of 10 or more, permitting obstacles to block the new vision, failing to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture" (Kotter, 2012). To combat these eight issues on why organizations fail, Kotter developed an 8-step process to follow to help mitigate or eliminate the errors that happen. See Figure 1 for illustration of the 8-Steps. These same errors happen not only in the business world but also in the military realm. With change comes many trials that an organization has to overcome if they want success.



**Figure 1. Kotter's 8-Step Process**

Kotter first broke the 8-steps into groups to help project a roadmap on how the 8-steps work together. The first category of the steps deal with “creating a climate for change” in the organization, the second phase is introducing “engaging and enabling the whole organization”, and the final stage is “implementing and sustaining change” into the culture of the organization to have them last over time (Kotter, 2012). Each one of categories have several steps in them to help lead an organization to potential success when changes occur. Breaking the categories into their separate steps are key to fully understanding the process.

## *Creating a Climate for Change*



**Figure 2. Creating a Climate for Change Steps**

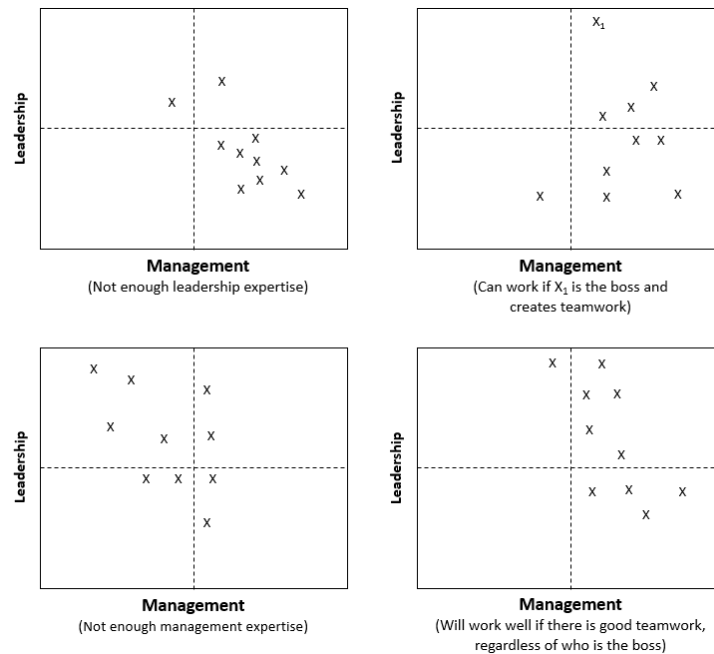
The first category deals with creating a climate for change in an organization. See Figure 2 for illustration of the three steps of Kotter's process in "Creating a Climate for Change." The three steps from Kotter's process in this category are: Establishing a Sense of Urgency, Creating the Guiding Coalition, and Developing a Vision and Strategy. For most organizations the first category often gets skipped and in these organizations there is little room for change to succeed because the status quo often takes root and is hard to dislodge once it is labeled as tradition or because of the "that is the way we have always done it" mentality. To help combat the status quo Kotter takes the first step by creating a sense of urgency in an organization.

Most organization look at urgency as getting things done in a time of crisis but not when changes have to occur. Kotter uses the sense of urgency as a way to combat complacency in the organization or "this is the way we have always done it" mentality. Complacency in an organization can actually slow the organization down when it comes

to changes that need to happen. The source of complacency in an organization include: absence of visible crisis, low standards, narrowly or incorrectly focused goals, and the lack of feedback (Kotter, 2012). By creating a strong sense of urgency not only in crisis, but in day to day operations, one requires bold or risky actions that go hand-in-hand with good leadership. Once the goal of creating urgency into an organization is met that organization and leadership team can move into the second step of creating the guiding coalition.

Creating the guiding coalition brings the right people together in an organization that will lead the change, and continue the urgency established in step one. No single individual can make the change happen, it takes a team effort and building the coalition is what accomplishes the goals of the organization. There are four key areas to look at when building a coalition which include; position of power, expertise, credibility, and leadership (Kotter, 2012). For the position of power, the organization needs to make sure the right mix of individuals from the main line supervisors is the proper amount and the individuals that are left out cannot easily block progress of the coalition. For expertise, you want to have various disciplines involved and you must ensure the expertise is relevant to the task that needs to change (Kotter, 2012). Credibility to the team is vital to having a lasting impact for change to happen. The credible coalition has individuals that can answer the tough questions and they are individuals that people will listen too. For leadership, the groups must include enough proven leadership that can drive change to the organization. For the coalition to succeed there needs to be a balance of leadership and management that works as a team to effect change. Looking at Figure 3 as taken

from Kotter's *Leading Change*, it displays four different types of coalitions that an organization could utilize for change (Kotter, 2012).

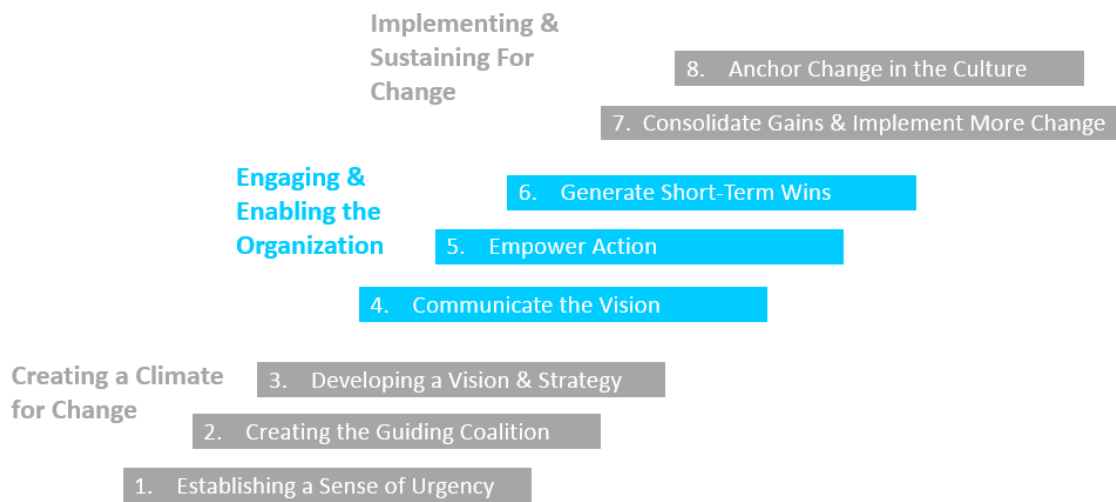


**Figure 3. Profiles of Four Different Guiding Coalitions (Kotter, 2012)**

The upper right image displays how a coalition does not have enough expertise to help with leading change. The second chart on the right displays how a coalition has that one expert in leadership but ultimately the individual would need to promote teamwork amongst the coalition to succeed. The lower left chart displays how the coalition has a balance of leadership but is lacking the management traits needed to succeed. Finally the lower left chart displays the right balance of leadership and management to make an effective coalition. For an organization to succeed there is a balance of leadership and management that is in place and will bolster the organization. Once the guiding coalition is formed the organization moves to developing a vision and strategy to bring about effective change.

The idea of creating a vision and strategy in most organizations is often overlooked or rushed and this leads organizations to suffer under change (Kotter, 2012). The idea of a vision and strategy give the overall sight picture of how the organization will be after the change is implemented. This gives the organization the reason for eliminating the status quo and establishes why the change is important. The vision and strategy also provide guidance to the organization on decision making to make the change happen. A vision serves three purposes to an organization which include; clarifying the direction of the change, motivating individuals to take action in the right direction, and helping coordinate the actions of different people in an efficient way (Kotter, 2012). The overall goal of a strategy to develop a means to obtain the vision of the organization. The strategy includes flexibility, ways, and means for the organization to succeed. The first three steps of Kotter's 8-step process deal with creating a climate of change in the organization. Once the organization has urgency, guiding coalition, and clear vision, they move into the second category of engaging and enabling the organization.

## ***Engaging and Enabling the Organization***



**Figure 4. Engaging & Enabling the Organization Steps**

Once an organization has a clear vision, that vision needs to reach the rest of the organization making change happen. The organization moves into the second category of Kotter's process of "Engaging and Enabling the Organization." See Figure 4 for illustration of the three steps in this process. The steps to communicate the vision are important to show new behaviors to the organization and to lead by example. The change, through a vision needs to be communicated and this communication requires simplicity and repetition in the organization. The idea behind utilizing simplicity and repetition to communicate the vision builds into retention and understanding of the change that is occurring (Kotter, 2012). In order to help with change, one should keep the communication as simple as possible. This helps to communicate to the individual or groups, who are making the change happen, and to get onboard and therefore the vision

will be everlasting. Once the vision is communicated in simple terms then the second part of change vision communication is that it is two-way communication.

The idea behind two-way communication is not just relying on a top-down approach but also including a bottom-up approach. Members of an organization should not be captive of the change that is happening. Two-way communication is an essential method of helping people answer all the questions that occur to them while change is occurring in the organization (Kotter, 2012). Two-way communication allows feedback to happen at all levels. The feedback can be good to the organization in that it allows for rethinking of the vision to make it clearer, but can also cause the organization to slow down and fail. By having a clear understanding of the vision, an organization will succeed in the next two steps in this category which include, empower action and create quick wins.

The fifth step of Kotter's process is empower action and it puts emphasis on removing the obstacles in the way of change in the organization. The reason that empowerment is critical to the success of the change is due to the many people wanting to maintain the status quo. The removal of the barriers, i.e. status quo, allows the change to happen and is critical for the organization to succeed. To help eliminate the barriers the leadership and the guiding coalition need to understand the organizational barriers that hinder the change and subsequently remove them (Kotter, 2012). The idea of empowering action does not just come from the leadership or the guiding coalition, but also from the individuals that are in the organization. The first four steps of Kotter's model are easier to accomplish than the empower action step. It is easy to tell everyone

that change needs to happen but it is harder to keep people moving in the correct direction for that change and this leads to the sixth step of generating short-term wins.

Short-term wins are actions needed for the change to be successful. Kotter defines a short-term win is an organizational improvement that can be implemented in six to eighteen months (Kotter, 2012). A short-term win consists of three aspects which include, success is unambiguous, it is visible throughout the organization, and it clearly relates to the change process. The reason short-term wins are vital to an organization is they ensure momentum is not lost during the change process, and keeps everyone engaged in the organization. Short-term wins are part of the process of the overall change and they are not the desired end-state of the organization. They are a way to get to the final goal of change to the organization leading into the third category of implementing and sustaining change.

### ***Implementing and Sustaining for Change***



**Figure 5. Implementing & Sustaining for Change Steps**

The third category is implementing and sustaining change and consists of the last two steps of Kotter's 8-steps process which include; consolidate gains and implement

more change, and anchor change in the culture (Kotter, 2012). See Figure 5 for illustration of the two steps in this process. The first step, consolidate gains and implement more change builds on the previous six steps.

Consolidate gains and implement more change stops an organization from falling back into complacency and keeps the organization moving forward to the end goal of the change. The idea behind this step is to group the short-term wins from step six and use them as a means to implement larger change for the overall goal. The seventh step emphasizes on building the change and not settling, but also realizing that more improvements can happen to reach the overall goal (Kotter, 2012). By adding more change after the short-term wins it helps to combat many of the individuals that are still resisting the change from happening. Senior leadership must maintain focus on the priorities and work with the guiding coalition to consolidate the gains, removing any unnecessary inter-dependencies, and implementing larger change in the organization (Kotter, 2012). Step seven helps the organization eliminate organizational complacency and any other organizational resistance that tries to revert back to the status quo. To have an organization truly succeed they have to move into the eighth and final step of anchor change in the culture.

There is nothing worse for an organization than spending large amounts of money, time, and effort to change only to have the organization move back to the old ways of doing business. If an organization does this it will hurt in the long-term and breed cynicism and affect morale of the organization, thus ensuring they would become more resistant to change in the future. The anchoring change in the culture is making the changes stick. To anchor the change in culture, the change effort that the organization

took must have brought positive results to the organization (Kotter, 2012). With the idea of a successful change effort, senior leadership can anchor the change through effective communication on how the change is superior to the old way of conducting operations and clearly explain the benefits that the change brought. Throughout the whole Kotter 8-step process communication is at the heart of every step. Senior leadership, management, and the individuals of the organization have to communicate to each other to have the change succeed and build a better organization.

### **Research Design**

The research design of this study delivers a description of the method in which case study data is acquired, the type of data to study, and how the data is analyzed. The primary tool of this case study is cross-functional survey. Survey research is a method of collecting information by asking questions to a given number of individuals to compare information to help discover the results of the case study topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The survey research for this study is utilizing the nuclear FIP (ICBM and bomber), and surveys from SAC to garner the information studied. The information from the surveys will be placed into Kotter's 8-step process to see how the organizations from SAC to AFGSC are doing on leading change in the Nuclear Enterprise.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the research design, methodology, and Kotter's 8-step process for organizational change implementation. This study uses previously accomplished surveys to gain valuable qualitative data that pertains to the Nuclear Enterprise from SAC to AFGSC. The data obtained from the surveys were placed in

Kotter's framework for each command to see how they utilized the 8-step process and the effects on the Nuclear Enterprise. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and provides ideas for answering this study's question to what the future Nuclear Enterprise will look like from the Air Force perspective.

## IV. Analysis and Results

*“...that culture isn’t just one aspect of the game, it is the game.”*

*Lou Gerstner  
Former CEO of IBM*

### Chapter Overview

The purpose of this research is to look at the history of the Nuclear Enterprise in the AF from SAC to AFGSC and discuss how to improve the command through Kotter’s 8-steps. The commands are placed into a grading matrix with the focus of the nuclear mission focus and changing culture of the command. Figure 6, grading matrix, displays the matrix utilized in each section of the chapter. The grading criteria located in the key of figure 6 include; excelled, adequate, fell short, and in process. The excelled category is marked when the command kept the focus on the nuclear mission and lead to the nuclear culture being affected the most. The adequate marking is the command had focus on the nuclear mission but also shifted the focus to other priorities in conventional and space assets. For the fell short grading criteria the command tried to eliminate the focus off of the nuclear mission and went to more conventional or space focused. When the command is marked fell short the nuclear mission was maintained but not at the cost of the conventional or space missions. The final category, in process, describes the command that is still moving through Kotter’s process.

	Kotter's 8-Steps of Leadership							
	Creating a Climate for Change			Engaging & Enabling the Organization			Implementing & Sustaining for Change	
MAJCOM	Urgency	Coalition	Vision	Communication	Empower	Wins	Gains	Anchor
SAC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
ACC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AFSPC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AFGSC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Key	
Exceeded	●
Adequate	●
Fell Short	●
In process	●

**Figure 6. Grading Matrix**

This chapter is broken into three categories; creating a climate for change, engaging and enabling the organization, and implementing and sustaining for change. Each category begins with the breakout of figure 6 into the smaller category. Each group discusses how the different commands implemented aspects of Kotter's process. Then, in the final section of sustaining change, it will look towards how to continue improving the nuclear mission under AFGSC.

### Creating a Climate for Change

	Kotter's 8-Steps of Leadership		
	Creating a Climate for Change		
MAJCOM	Urgency	Coalition	Vision
SAC	●	●	●
ACC	●	●	●
AFSPC	●	●	●
AFGSC	●	●	●

Key	
Exceeded	●
Adequate	●
Fell Short	●

**Figure 7. Creating a Climate for Change Matrix**

This phase of research looks at the first three steps, establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, and developing a vision and strategy of Kotter's

process as displayed in figure 7. Each one of the commands developed this process when they first formed. SAC, under General Kenny, did not have a strong desire to create urgency within the organization. The reason for this was the force drawdown of World War II and the subsequent drive for the AF to be a separate service, both of which took precedence over the need for nuclear bombing. With the appointment of General LeMay to SAC in 1948 there was a shift created to make the command the active command to fight the nation's nuclear war (Tillman, 2007). LeMay instilled in his personnel a sense of urgency to have a perfection mindset because of the no-mistake environment of nuclear weapons. LeMay expected all SAC units to be ready to conduct their mission and he maintained this urgency by implementing the no-notice ORI (Bleil, 2006). ORIs forced commanders underneath SAC to be ready and the bomber crews, and later the ICBM crew force, trained to conduct the mission to those standards set forth by the command.

Another aspect of SAC was the selection process to assign personnel to the command. The command selected from individuals already in the AF and not straight from basic training pipelines. By selecting these individuals after they had some AF background, SAC ensured it created a guiding coalition, one that is required to ensure change becomes a normality. As SAC moved through the years, many of the individuals selected in the beginning would move through the ranks and continue the process of having SAC lead the way for the AF. Eventually the process ended of hand-selecting personnel to the command due to limiting numbers of AF personnel force wide.

SAC, through leadership, developed a clear vision for the bomber and ICBM forces. The vision resides in the motto of SAC that "Peace is Our Profession," and to

accomplish this vision SAC leadership pushed their personnel to perfection (United States Air Force, 1992). The philosophy that a mistake with nuclear weapons is too great and threatens the peace was accepted and embraced within the command. This perfection, to maintain the vision, called for the personnel to adhere to strict regulations and checklists. This mentality moved to ACC, AFSPC, and AFGSC but the idea of thinking outside the box was reinforced under ACC and AFSPC.

For ACC, in this area of Kotter's process, they utilized the necessary step to create urgency within the command, when it stood-up in 1992, however they focused this urgency on conventional capability at the expense of the Nuclear Enterprise. The leaders of ACC recognized the conventional strike capabilities that the bombers had during Vietnam had atrophied, and the bomber force was too focused on the nuclear mission. The since of urgency was moving away from the nuclear training to a more conventional focus. With fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, the call for bombers was high and the conventional mission took precedence. The urgency that was created had the bomber force move away from their primary nuclear mission. This shift in focus led to issues of complacency when it came to nuclear operations and eventually led to the transporting of nuclear-tipped missiles from North Dakota to Louisiana (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012).

For the guiding coalition of ACC, the commanders of the AF appointed like-minded individuals to be in-charge of the bomber forces. For a guiding coalition there needs to be balance when building the coalition that will implement the change that needs to be implemented. Part of the Kotter's process is to have the correct balance of expertise and leadership on the coalition (Kotter, 2012). By having like-minded individuals on the

coalition, it ensured that no one was willing to speak out about the change that was happening from nuclear focus to conventional focus. With the shift, the bomber force moved away from their primary mission and moved towards the way the command was heading, focusing solely on an ability to fight a conventional war. The coalition was so focused on the conventional side, since it was the most likely used situation for future wars, the nuclear mission suffered. There was no true nuclear threat, in the commanders of ACC eyes that a conventional force could not handle. If bomber crew members wanted to succeed in ACC they had to change their culture to match the rest of the command.

ACC moved into the next step of Kotter's process of creating a vision for change. The leaders of ACC wanted the bombers to improve on their conventional strike capabilities. To do this the training changed to more conventional in nature. The reason for this is because of the lack of performance by the bombers during the Gulf War. With the shift to fighting the air war, and providing air support in Iraq and Afghanistan, ACC followed the vision set forth by its commanders. This vision was clear to the members of ACC and the change started to materialize in procedures for the bomber force. For AFSPC, there was a cultural change that was happening at the same time.

AFSPC accepted the responsibility of the ICBM force in 1993, and as such, went to change the culture of the force. To start off with the step of creating the urgency, AFSPC utilized the fact space was the next arena combat could move in to. The Gulf War illustrated the impact space assets had on operations, both friendly and adversarial. Space is a force enhancer to the nation on fighting our future wars. ICBMs, on the other hand, were viewed as Cold War relics. In many cases, the urgency of the ICBM crews to

move from their crew duty and get to a space assignment, contributed to the lack of expertise in the nuclear mission set. AFSPC leadership wanted the operators to be well-rounded in all aspects of AFSPC from ICBMs to satellite control and so forth. Getting a space assignment was key after initial missile duty if there was any hope to promote within the command (Stout, 2012). AFSPC was looking to the future of space and how it would impact the warfighter, and the ICBM force was left to just maintain the status quo. The sense of urgency shifted focus away from the nuclear mission, much like ACC and the bombers, and placed it on space.

For AFSPC in the second step of Kotter's process, forming a coalition, had a mix of officers with some ICBM experience. In the beginning of AFSPC the staff had all functional areas, but eventually this changed to having less people that were core nuclear on the staff. By maintaining a coalition that is diverse in expertise from all aspects of AFSPC, it would greatly assist with changing the culture at all levels within the command. Instead, from the review of the material, the coalition eventually ended up with people with more space experience than ICBM experience. The shift was due to the vision that AFSPC had for the operators in the command.

Creating the vision of change in AFSPC was similar to ACC. There was a push to have everyone focus on space instead of the nuclear mission. There were a select few who remained in missiles, while the vision was towards space, but these individuals would fight an uphill battle to try and improve the ICBM force. The reason for this is due to the vision of AFSPC on what was important to the space and missile career field.

AFGSC was formed due to the incidents that happened in the AF Nuclear Enterprise in 2008. The flying of nuclear weapons and the shipping of ICBM fuses to













Taiwan, showed the atrophy of the nuclear mission (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012). AFGSC looked to change the Nuclear Enterprise and bring focus back to the nuclear mission that was the foundation of the defense of the country. The urgency created was to establish a command focused on the nuclear mission in the AF, per the recommendation of the Schlesinger report (Schlesinger, 2008). The focus of the AF had to be not only on fighting the conventional wars abroad but also on the Nuclear Enterprise.

Another cause for urgency in AFGSC was due to the 2014 missileer cheating incident (AFGSC, 2014). The demand for perfection went back to the days of SAC and was used for hiring processes at the missile wing level. AFGSC called for a new program to help change the culture called FIP (AFGSC, 2014). The FIP process looked to improve AFGSC and refocus the priorities of the command. AFGSC is continuing the process of improving the command and maintaining the sense of urgency to ward off complacency.




The FIP process brought about a coalition versed in expertise of the mission to include operators, both missile and bomber, maintenance, security forces, and support personnel on the team. This coalition went out to the wings in AFGSC to look to improve processes and gain recommendations for what was needed to be done to change the culture of AFGSC. This coalition was more in tune with Kotter's idea and brought the correct mix of individuals to have the complete understanding of all the career fields in AFGSC. The coalition formed a vision for where the focus of the nuclear mission should be.

The vision to change the culture was not to go back to SAC, but acknowledging that something had to change, and focus had to get back to nuclear operations. Perfection is still the standard, but the command changed the standard for the mission. An example of this happened in the missile community with changing the way monthly testing occurred. The test moved to a quarterly requirement as a minimum and the tests went to a pass/fail requirement (AFGSC, 2014). This was a shift that aligned with the vision set forth by AFGSC and led to members focusing on operations instead of worrying about their test scores. The coalition had to have a clear vision for what was expected out of the forces in AFGSC, and that is changing the culture in the nuclear community.

### Engaging and Enabling the Organization

	Kotter's 8-Steps of Leadership		
	Engaging & Enabling the Organization		
MAJCOM	Communication	Empower	Wins
SAC			
ACC			
AFSPC			
AFGSC			

Key	
Exceeded	
Adequate	
Fell Short	

**Figure 8. Engaging & Enabling the Organization Matrix**

When an organization has a clear vision set forward by the coalition they move into the fourth step of Kotter's process and that is communication of the vision to everyone in the organization. Figure 8 displays the grading matrix for the steps in Kotter's process. SAC communicated the clear vision to the bomber and missile wings on what was expected and that was to be ready to execute the nuclear war at any time. The crews, both bomber and missile, understood the vision at their levels. As SAC

moved through the years the focus and understanding of the vision started to shift due to actions taken by the command from inspection results and taking actions against commanders that failed these inspections. This issue with SAC is it allowed the vision to change once everyone understood the initial vision. Communication needs to remain constant, and SAC continually reinforced the vision of the command to be the best at the strategic mission. From communicating the vision, Kotter's process moves into the empowering action of the organization and SAC was no different.

SAC looked at every action that caused a problem in the bomber and missile force. They learned from these actions and would update the training or the technical orders if the mistake had correctable actions. By having technical orders, it meant that people could change them if something worked better after testing the process. SAC wanted to have the best process in place so they were constantly trying to improve the way to conduct nuclear operations. One way of empowering personnel moves into the sixth step of Kotter's process of creating quick wins.

SAC in the early years had to work to the expectations that LeMay required of his command. One way that SAC garnered quick wins was by instituting the Olympic Arena competitions. The Olympic Arenas took place every year under SAC and the winners were the best bomber and missile crews in SAC. These competitions looked to improve training and test the weapon systems to the full extent possible. This is considered a quick win because as the crews got better, the mission improved in SAC. Another quick win under SAC was changing the housing for SAC members. LeMay developed the SAC barracks that allowed for 24-hour operations without disturbing members in crew rest. Under SAC there was a push to improve the way of life for all members of SAC.

These programs led to members wanting to come to SAC and accomplish the vision of the command. ACC would take a different route by shifting the focus from the nuclear mission to the conventional one.

ACC communicated their vision to the command through the leadership at every wing. The goal was to fully integrate the bombers and fighter communities and bring the best conventional force to the fight. This communication went to the training of bomber crews moving from the nuclear heavy training to more conventional forces (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012). The communication was set that the nuclear mission would come second. Bomber crews started to improve on conducting conventional strike missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. These improvements show how the vision was communicated well to the units of ACC. With the shift to conventional, the bomber crews were empowered to be more flexible, achieving another goal of ACC.

ACC wanted all their crews, both bomber and fighter, to be more flexible in pursuing the conventional fight. To accomplish this ACC fully integrated the bomber force into different exercises. One of these exercises is Red Flag, an exercise that generates an air campaign for practice fighting a future war (Deaile, 2007). These exercises looked to improve the process of fighting the air war on the tactical level. The bomber crews were no longer tied to the strict adherence procedures, but forced to be more flexible and ready for the ever-changing battlefield. These exercises changed training and this produced the quick wins the command was looking for.

ACC looked to reach these quick wins in the command by trying to fully integrate both bomber and fighter communities together. By integrating their training, ACC brought the communities together on every level. Another quick win was changing the

Fighter Weapon School to just Weapon School (Deaile, 2007). This simple act showed the bomber force was a part of ACC and they would be trained on how to fight a conventional war. The Weapon School brought commonality to ACC and grew the command. It would take many years before the focus changed from conventional, but more equal in nuclear as well. AFSPC would go through the same process as SAC and ACC when trying to implement their change in culture.

AFSPC communicated the vision to the command through the policies emplaced throughout the command. When missile wings would need to rack and stack their requirements to get approval and be placed in the budget priority, they competed against space programs at the headquarters level (Stout, 2012). Often times the missile requirements would not make the list for the budget because the space programs were enhancing the forces on the ground. Another aspect of policies in place, was the career field management of the space and missile operations field. The career field managers pushed to get people to space after their initial ICBM crew tour was complete. From there it might be decades before someone would come back to the missile side of the career field. This importance to space was the vision that AFSPC developed.

AFSPC moved to Kotter's fifth step of empowering action by looking at maintaining the nuclear mission. They brought the idea of Olympic Arena called Guardian Challenge to the command initially, but moved it from every year to every two years (Stout, 2012). This still empowers personnel to think critically on how to improve the ICBM system through competition. Many changes to the technical orders are attributed to the competition and it gave personnel a chance to take action on the system and fix these issues. From the research, most of the nuclear community in AFSPC

looked to sustain instead of modify or replace with a new system. The empowerment of the Nuclear Enterprise was limited at best.

For the sixth step of Kotter's process, create quick wins, the move to AFSPC, and the push to go to space assignments after initial ICBM tour, provided a quick win for the missileers that might never get a chance to go to other non-nuclear bases at the time. This provided a way out of the missile business, and in some cases it was considered a win. In others it meant the individuals would have to learn a new job that demanded flexibility to accomplish the mission. The wins that AFSPC took into account promoted the viability of space over the nuclear mission, and it would take AFGSC to try and shift the focus back to the nuclear mission.









AFGSC presents a clear vision of where the command needs to be. After the incident in 2014 at Malmstrom AFB, MT the command re-emphasized at all levels the importance of the nuclear mission. Both Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, and Secretary of the Air Force Deborah James, have said the nuclear mission is the number one priority of the AF (Air Force Public Affairs Agency, 2014). Not only saying the nuclear mission is important, but having all leaders of the AF relay the same information to the service personnel. Communication is key to Kotter's process of leading change and AFGSC is in constant communication with members of the Nuclear Enterprise, reinforcing the importance of the mission. With the communication of the vision for AFGSC they also empowered personnel to impact the change.

For empowerment to the personnel, the FIP programs allowed individuals to highlight their concerns with the mission. With FIP, the training cycles and requirements changed for the missile community, being based more on operations instead of the





required tasks for the month being accomplished. The command wanted the decision process pushed to the appropriate level, and through FIP, many of the levels were identified. One example is in the missile field, a crew member would have to ask for permission to change a route due to road conditions, from someone on the base. After the FIP initiative, the decisions were pushed to the crew member actually on the road, dealing with the road conditions. AFGSC looked to empower the personnel to be leaders at all levels to improve the nuclear mission under the command. With empowerment of the personnel in AFGSC, the next step of Kotter's process, the idea of creating quick wins, is utilized.

The FIP initiative helped to produce the quick wins that AFGSC looked for the nuclear forces. Under FIP there were 303 recommendations provided to improve the force (AFGSC, 2014). One recommendation was to eliminate the score on testing and make the tests pass/fail. This brought about a quick win because no longer were people feeling like their potential job was in jeopardy. This little change turned into a quick win because it was simple in nature. The quick wins ranged from quality of life issues to getting needed equipment for all personnel in the missile field and support agencies. With the changes, the culture of the enterprise is also changing, and this will assist in making these changes impactful enough that they impact the culture.

## Implementing and Sustaining for Change

	Kotter's 8-Steps of Leadership	
	Implementing & Sustaining for Change	
MAJCOM	Gains	Anchor
SAC		
ACC		
AFSPC		
AFGSC		

Key	
Exceeded	
Adequate	
Fell Short	
In process	

**Figure 9. Implementing & Sustaining for Change Matrix**

For implementing and sustaining change is composed of the two final steps of Kotter's process and SAC, ACC, AFSPC, and AFGSC worked or are working through them as displayed in figure 9. For SAC the constant push to be perfect at the nuclear mission worked on building on the change and making the change in culture stick in the command. The bomber and missile crews continued to try to meet the standards or exceed them in their actions for SAC. SAC, from the research, had an idea that they were the command to fight the nation's nuclear wars and personnel in the command had a sense of pride, not only for the AF, but for SAC as well. For ACC the focus of the change moved to the conventional mission.

ACC continued to improve the bomber force, conventionally, ensuring they were an asset in a conventional fight. More focus on training and operations helped to shift the bomber focus, and they embraced the flexibility that the fighter community had before the dissolution of SAC. The crews were able to provide the support needed in the conventional fight at the detriment to the nuclear mission. ACC continued to stress the importance of the conventional mission and as such limited the crews on their training

with nuclear missions. Because of this lack of focus the complacency set in that Kotter tries to eliminate in the nuclear mission set. The bomber crews and maintainers were more focused on the vision that ACC gave them and not worried as much on the nuclear mission. AFSPC would do the same thing in the nuclear mission from the ICBM perspective.

AFSPC looked to make officers fully embraced within the space mission, both in breadth and depth. The space mission included the ICBM force, but in many cases the ICBM experience was limited to a few personnel in the command. This limitation in experience is a direct cause from the shift in focus from nuclear to space systems. With the shift in focus to space, complacency set in at all levels when it came to dealing with the ICBM force. The ICBM force was not looked at as an equal, this was repeatedly illustrated during budget drills at the command level (Stout, 2012). So AFSPC did accomplish the last two steps of Kotter's process, but it was at the detriment of the Nuclear Enterprise.

AFGSC is still moving into the last two steps of Kotter's process. With the change in training and building on that change, AFGSC is looking to improve the culture of the Nuclear Enterprise in the AF as a whole. The ideas of the change, refocusing on the nuclear mission, are still progressing forward and on a routine bases AFGSC continues to try and improve the units under the command. Changing a culture takes time, and AFGSC is doing the work to make the culture change and ensure the change is permanent to the nuclear mission.

## **Summary**

This case study looked at how SAC, ACC, AFSPC, and AFGSC utilized Kotter's 8-step approach to leading change. All four organizations had leaders in place that wanted to make change for the better and to do so they approached it from a culture perspective. The major findings from the research was the drastic shift from just solely focusing on the nuclear mission under SAC to then solely on conventional and space assets in ACC and AFSPC respectively. AFGSC is continuing the process to have a mix of conventional and nuclear mission sets to improve the culture of the Nuclear Enterprise in the AF. Through the research, there are other areas that can be utilized for further discussion and they will be discussed in the next section.

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The research and analysis of this study provided theoretical and qualitative insight on the Nuclear Enterprise from SAC to AFGSC utilizing Kotter's 8-step process of leading change. The objective of this study sought to assess how each command influenced the nuclear mission both positive and negative. The study looked to identify how AFGSC can build on the changes in culture to make a more affective command for the future. By utilizing Kotter's process, AFGSC can improve the nuclear culture both in the command and in the Air Force. The focus of the Nuclear Enterprise is the nuclear mission and AFGSC cannot lose the focus and allow compliancy to set in or the nuclear mission will fail.

The Air Force Nuclear Enterprise is a mission set steeped in history from SAC to AFGSC. The nuclear culture for the first 45 years established its self as the premier command and the foundation of the armed forces of the United States. With the end of the Cold War and the victory in the Gulf War caused a shift and the nuclear mission became secondary to the conventional and space missions und ACC and AFSPC. The United States rode the peace dividend and lost focus and assumed the nuclear mission was a Cold War relic. When the unauthorized shipments of fuses and nuclear tipped missiles to other locations caused the Air Force to rethink the nuclear mission (Spencer, Lundin, & Nelson, 2012). AFGSC stood up a new command to handle everything nuclear in the Air Force and make the nuclear mission the priority. A change in culture in the Nuclear Enterprise is ongoing under AFGSC building on the past with the goal for the future. The research study identified the areas that each command did well and

poorly on the nuclear mission. By analyzing each command's attributes, they contributed to the future of the Nuclear Enterprise. The next section identifies the three recommendations derived from the research.

## **Recommendations**

The three recommendations from this study include; allowing change in culture time to happen, communication at all levels, and look to the other commands to improve the culture. These three areas impact the Nuclear Enterprise and develop the future of AFGSC. The first recommendation is allowing change in culture time.

Culture is developed over time and is constantly evolving. The Nuclear Enterprise culture is currently going through major changes both in training and execution of the mission. The Air Force is quick to changing culture but not allowing time for the culture to grab hold and have a lasting impact. AFGSC needs time for the changes that were implemented in FIP to affect the culture. Just because the program does not give quick wins does not mean the program is bad. Time is needed in a culture change and AFGSC needs the time for building the future of the Nuclear Enterprise. The next area discussed is communication at all levels.

Communication in AFGSC is vital to the success of the command. With the generational shift of the service to a younger force, communication is the most critical point of Kotter's process. Looking at Kotter's process the future command needs a balance of all the steps impacting a culture change. Figure 10 displays the matrix for Kotter's process and the future row is the priorities identified on each step of the process. AFGSC should follow the 8-step process when major changes happen in the command.

The number one priority is the communication of the vision at all levels of the command. By having an informed force and understanding the change pays dividends in the culture. Not having the communication at all levels allows complacency in the force. The overall goal of improving the culture relies on the communication step. The third and final recommendation is looking at other commands, both past and current, for improving the culture

MAJCOM	Kotter's 8-Steps of Leadership							
	Creating a Climate for Change			Engaging & Enabling the Organization			Implementing & Sustaining for Change	
	Urgency	Coalition	Vision	Communication	Empower	Wins	Gains	Anchor
SAC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
ACC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AFSPC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AFGSC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Future	2	3	6	1	4	5	7	8

Key	
Exceeded	●
Adequate	●
Fell Short	●
In process	●

**Figure 10. Future Matrix of Kotter's Process**

By looking at the past and current commands will improve the culture of the Nuclear Enterprise. Looking at what SAC did correctly of the spot promotions, living accommodations, and establishing regulations for nuclear war lead to a strong culture of SAC units across the nation. Having the flexibility in the aircrews that ACC brought to the nuclear mission allows the bomber force as force multiplier in not only the nuclear mission but the conventional role as well. AFSPC brought about a change of thinking outside the box to the ICBM force and allows missileers flexibility in conducting operations and training. The flexibility in the ICBM force only enhances the foundation of the Air Force and Nuclear Enterprise giving the President of the United States options for execution of the nuclear mission instead of firing all ICBMs at a country. The next

section of the chapter looks to identify the areas of further research on the topic of culture change.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

While conducting the research for this case study areas came to light for future research. The three areas for further research include; in-depth look at SAC programs that built the SAC culture, a manning study for what the correct number of personnel needed for the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise under AFGSC, and an assessment of the FIP initiatives conducted in 2015 and the impacts on the Nuclear Enterprise. By having further research in these areas potentially improve the culture of the Nuclear Enterprise as the nuclear mission changes over time.


### **Summary**

This chapter provided conclusions based on the literature review of the history of the Nuclear Enterprise from SAC to AFGSC. By utilizing Kotter's 8-step process of leading change in a culture three recommendations for AFGSC were concluded which improve the command for the future. Also three areas for further research are mentioned with the idea of improving the Nuclear Enterprise culture for the future. The most impactful part of culture is it takes time to evolve. An organization that is going through change needs time for the change to take hold. AFGSC has time for the culture to change but must allow the time to happen before implementing another major change to the organization.

## **Appendix A. Graduate Research Project Storyboard**


# Looking to the Future of the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise

Based on analysis of past command influences from SAC to AFGSC utilizing the 8-Step Kotter process of changing culture in the Nuclear Enterprise an how to shape the future of AFGSC



## Looking to the Future of the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise

Based on analysis of past command influences from SAC to AFGSC utilizing the 8-Step Kotter process of changing culture in the Nuclear Enterprise an how to shape the future of AFGSC



**Maj Robert "Curb" Evans**  
**Advisor: Lt Col Joseph R. Huscroft, PhD**  
 Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies (ENS)  
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### Abstract

Within the last few years, there has been a call to bring the nuclear mission back to what it was in the eyes of many Air Force leaders. The first leading step to developing the key nuclear mission set is standing up Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) to take the lead of organization and training of two thirds of the nuclear triad. To understand the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise, one needs to look to the past and see how Strategic Air Command (SAC) came into existence. The decades from the ending of SAC in 1991 to 2015 also impacted the culture of the nuclear mission.

The first command to accept the nuclear mission sets, both bomber and intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), after the end of the Cold War was Air Combat Command (ACC). The ICBMs would move out of ACC to Air Force Space Command (AFSPC) in 1993. A thorough review was conducted of the surveys performed under each command to see how culture changed in the Nuclear Enterprise. The study highlights the positive and negative impacts on the current Nuclear Enterprise culture. The research goal is the nuclear mission has evolved and change in culture takes time.

### Methodology


The understanding of Kotter's 8-Step process gives a baseline to analysis how each command of the Nuclear Enterprise impacts the culture. The approach of grading each command under Kotter's 8-Steps with regards to the nuclear mission are labeled as excelled, adequate, fell short, and in process.

The excelled category is a command that keeps the nuclear mission as the primary focus. The adequate grade is for the commands that had the nuclear focus but ultimately pushed for more focus on conventional and space mission requirements. The third grouping, fell short, is for the commands that tried to eliminate the nuclear mission culture for a conventional or space mission focus.

Surveys conducted under each command were utilized to see the impact the changes had on the nuclear culture. The survey responses were placed into the grading matrix for each command with regards to Kotter's process.

### Recommendations

1. Allow the culture changes in the Nuclear Enterprise time to take hold and grow before another change happens.
2. With the generational shift in the Air Force communication of the vision for the change is the most important aspect of Kotter's process and the command of the future has open communication at all levels.
3. Look to other commands both past and present to see how they have handled culture change in the Air Force and bring positive attributes to build the future of the Nuclear Enterprise.
4. Future research opportunity: Conduct a review of the Force Improvement Program initiatives to see the impacts on the nuclear culture in the Air Force.



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### Implementing & Sustaining For Change

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency
2. Creating the Guiding Coalition
3. Developing a Vision & Strategy for Change
4. Communicate the Vision
5. Empower Action
6. Generate Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidate Gains & Implement More Change
8. Anchor Change in the Culture

### Enabling & Engaging the Organization

### Research Goal

Qualitative research (specifically case study research) was used based on the ability to garner meaningful insight to provide a holistic picture of the study's topic. The case study took a historical look of the culture in the Nuclear Enterprise and what insights of the previous commands impacted the mission set. The question to answer is:

What is the impact on the culture of the Nuclear Enterprise from SAC to AFGSC and what does the future command need to accomplish?

### Key

Excelled	Adequate	Fell Short	In process
Green	Yellow	Red	Blue

### Grading Matrix

Command	Creating a Climate for Change				Developing a Vision & Strategy for Change				Communicating the Vision				Empowering Action				Generating Short-Term Wins				Consolidating Gains & Implementing More Change				Anchoring Change in the Culture			
	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy				
MACV/JTFM	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
SAC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
ACC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
AFSPC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
AFGSC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
Future	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				

### Leadership Matrix

Leadership	Management				Management				Management				Management			
	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy	Urgency	Guidance	Coalition	Strategy
MACV/JTFM	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
SAC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
ACC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
AFSPC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
AFGSC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Future	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

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## **Vita**

Major Robert Evans is currently a student in the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies (SANDS) at, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Major Evans received his commission from the United States Air Force Academy in May 2003. He has served as missile combat crew commander and missile combat crew Senior Crew Instructor commander. During this time Major Evans logged 3782 hours on nuclear alert duty for 50 ICBMs. From there, he was selected for assignment as the Executive Officer to the commander, 90th Missile Wing. He was responsible for managerial oversight and execution of all 90th Missile Wing internal and external taskings. Continuing to build his nuclear expertise, Major Evans was selected for the 576th Flight Test Program executing the Force Development and Evaluation of the MMIII weapon system. Culminating his time at the 576th, Major Evans was selected to be an Executive Officer to the 451st Air Expeditionary Wing commander in Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. He was responsible for oversight and execution of all 451st and NATO forces internal and external taskings and was also responsible for providing assistance to the wing staff in day-to-day operations. Building on his leadership expertise, Major Evans was assigned to the 341st Operation Support Squadron where he served as the Assistant Director of Operations, Training and Codes. He was responsible for the training program for ICBM crew members as well as the wing codes system.

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